



DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

[Docket No. APHIS-2023-0068]

Addition of Belarus to the List of Regions Affected with Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza

AGENCY: Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: We are advising the public that we added Belarus to the list of regions that the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service considers to be affected by highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI). This action follows our imposition of HPAI-related restrictions on avian commodities originating from or transiting Belarus, as a result of reports of HPAI in that country.

DATES: Belarus was added to the list of regions APHIS considers to be affected with HPAI, effective on August 22, 2023.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. Heather Sriranganathan, APHIS Veterinary Services, Regionalization Evaluation Services, 4700 River Road, Riverdale, MD, 20747; phone: (717) 818-3582; email: AskRegionalization@usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

The regulations in 9 CFR part 94 (referred to below as the regulations) govern the importation of certain animals and animal products into the United States to prevent the introduction of various animal diseases, including Newcastle disease and highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI). The regulations prohibit or restrict the importation of live poultry, poultry meat, and other poultry products from regions where these diseases are considered to exist.

Section 94.6 of the regulations contains requirements governing the importation into the United States of carcasses, meat, parts or products of carcasses, and eggs (other than hatching

eggs) of poultry, game birds, or other birds from regions of the world where HPAI exists or is reasonably believed to exist. HPAI is an extremely infectious and potentially fatal form of avian influenza in birds and poultry that, once established, can spread rapidly from flock to flock. The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) maintains a list of restricted regions it considers affected with HPAI of any subtype on the APHIS website at <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/animal-and-animal-product-import-information/animal-health-status-of-regions>.

APHIS receives notice of HPAI outbreaks from veterinary officials of the exporting country, from the World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH),¹ or from other sources the Administrator determines to be reliable.

On August 22, 2023, APHIS added Belarus to the list of regions where HPAI exists based on credible media and interagency reports of HPAI outbreaks in poultry in Belarus. On that same day, APHIS issued an import alert notifying stakeholders that APHIS imposed restrictions on the importation of poultry, commercial birds, ratites, avian hatching eggs, unprocessed avian products and byproducts, and certain fresh poultry commodities from Belarus to mitigate risk of HPAI introduction into the United States.

With the publication of this notice, we are informing the public that we added Belarus to the list of regions APHIS considers affected with HPAI of any subtype, effective August 22, 2023. This notice serves as an official record and public notification of this action.

Congressional Review Act

Pursuant to the Congressional Review Act (5 U.S.C. 801 *et seq.*), the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs designated this action as not a major rule, as defined by 5 U.S.C. 804(2).

¹ The World Organization for Animal Health internationally follows a British English spelling of “organisation” in its name; also, it was formerly the Office International des Epizooties, or OIE, but on May 28, 2022, the Organization announced that the acronym was changed from OIE to WOAH.

Authority: 7 U.S.C. 1633, 7701-7772, 7781-7786, and 8301-8317; 21 U.S.C. 136 and 136a; 31 U.S.C. 9701; 7 CFR 2.22, 2.80, and 371.4.

Done in Washington, DC, this 30th day of October 2023.

Michael Watson,

Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

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